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Our Man in the Kremlin

How Russian Agents

Communicate With Spies in U.S.

Last in a series.

By Frank Gibney

One of the most significant documents which Col. Oleg Penkovsky managed to smuggle out of Moscow to the West was the top-secret lecture given by Lt. Col. I. E. Prihodko to a select audience of Soviet intelligence officers in Moscow, in 1961.

Titled "Characteristics of Agent Communications and Agent Handling in the U.S.A.," the lecture is nothing less than a detailed instruction manual for the use of Soviet spies and their American agents, in spying on U.S. secrets.

Probably never in the history of espionage has a document like this ever been surfaced to public view.

In yesterday's excerpt from the Prihodko lecture,

the Soviet spy, who had once done spying work in New York under cover of his nominal

The Lecture

Under modern conditions, when the U.S.A., as the principal imperialist power, is preparing to unleash a surprise war with the mass employment of nuclear/missile weapons, the basic task of our strategic agent intelligence is to give early warning of U.S. preparations for an armed attack against the U.S.S.R. and other socialist countries.

In view of the probable nature of a future war, an important task is the systematic collection of the most complete data on the following questions:

1. The locations of U.S. missile bases, depots for nuclear weapons, plants producing atomic weapons and missiles of various designations, scientific research institutes, and laboratories developing and perfecting weapons of mass destruction.

2. The nature and results of scientific research work in the field of creating new mod-

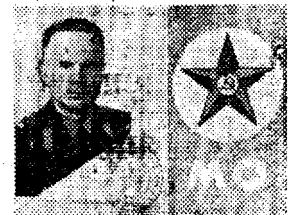
els of that country. The most important task of intelligence is the prompt reporting of objectives in the United States against which we plan to carry out the first strikes.

Soviet intelligence, therefore, should adopt timely measures to guarantee the security of its intelligence net. To achieve this it is necessary to disperse our operating "residences" and to move some valuable single agents some distance outside the limits of large cities. As for agent nets engaged in collecting intelligence on atomic and missile bases, they should preferably consist of individual sources equipped with radio having direct communications with the "Center" in Moscow.

Meeting Vulnerable

A meeting between intelligence officer and agent is one of the most vulnerable points in the intelligence net. Therefore, in organizing meetings, our intelligence officers must antici-

the week, and dates of the month. For example, meetings should not be held on the fifth day of each month, on Wednesday of every



week, or consistently at 8 p.m., because such consistency in the activities of an intelligence officer makes the work of American counterintelligence easier.

Under present working conditions in the U.S.A., one should start for a meeting not later than two to three hours before the scheduled time, and establish a good "cover" story for the meeting.

For example: An intelligence officer in the U.S.A.

decided to see the new film. They all went inside. The intelligence officer, who had a meeting scheduled with an agent, quickly departed through a side door and left for the meeting site along a previously selected route. The meeting was successful. Toward evening the intelligence officer and his family returned home after a restful Sunday.

Rendezvous at Night

Most meetings are held in the evening, however. As a rule, the agent does not work in the evening and does not have to ask permission of his boss to leave. In addition, evenings provide the greatest security. It is not recommended, however, to hold meetings in a park, because, unlike Europeans, Americans visit parks only during the day.

At the approach of darkness nobody uses the parks. At that time of the day only criminal elements and persons who are mentally ill can be found in the parks. In the press one can find special warnings concerning the danger in going to parks in the evening. It is not unusual for the newspapers to publish detailed accounts of rapes and murders which were committed in the parks during the night.

In choosing a meeting place, it is necessary of course to consider the character of the country as a whole and, above all, the characteristics of the area. As a whole, conditions in the cities of New York and Washington, for example, are favorable for the organization of agent communications.

The existence of a subway in New York helps in locating different places in the city. It should be borne in mind, however, that the subway system there is quite complicated and it should be studied carefully before planning to use it for operational purposes.

In New York it is easy to establish a cover story for going downtown either during the day or at night, because New York has many public places. Skillful use of transportation facilities makes it possible to make a good check for the detection of surveillance. Finally, an intelligence officer who speaks with an accent in New York is quite acceptable. A large segment of the city's population speaks with an accent.

organization and utilization of agent communications in Washington are full of difficulties because of the city's small size, its limited number of public places, no subways, and an inadequate public transportation system, especially in the suburbs.

New York Problems

Differences exist not only among the sections and cities of the United States, but also among different sections of cities, often within the very same borough or area.

For example, let us take Manhattan, which is the business area of New York. Negro Harlem is unsuitable for the organization of agent communications in Manhattan. It is located north of Central Park, and the Chinese quarter, located downtown, is also difficult for agents. Extreme squalor distinguishes the Chinese quarter. A properly dressed person will stand out sharply there.

As for Negro Harlem, white people cross it only by automobile. A white person is unsafe there, because the Negroes regard every white person who comes there as a curiosity-seeker who came to view them much as people go to the zoo to view the animals in cages.

We do not recommend that meetings be held in the area between 42d and 34th Streets. This is the busiest part of midtown and therefore has the widest coverage by the police and by counterintelligence.

Likewise, it is unadvisable to hold meetings in the vicinity of the U.N. Building (along the shore of the East River, between 42d and 48th Streets), near buildings of the permanent representations of various countries to the U.N. and, above all, the delegations to the U.N. of representations of socialist countries (the representation of the U.S.S.R. to the United Nations is located at 680 Park Avenue), nor in the vicinity of large banks, jewelry stores, etc.

Washington Details

In Washington, meetings should not be held in the central part of the city, near congressional buildings, the White House, de-

partmental buildings and other governmental offices, large banks, stores and restaurants are located. Neither should they be held on the main streets of the city, or in areas where foreign embassies and, especially, the embassies of the U.S.S.R. and other countries of the socialist camp are located. Meetings should also not be held in areas near military objectives or in the Negro district.

Generally, an operation can be compromised through the improper selection of a meeting site. For example, an intelligence officer, who did not know the city well, once selected a meeting place with an agent on a street corner in the evening. A large bank stood on this corner.

The intelligence officer arrived for the meeting exactly at the appointed time. The agent was late. The intelligence officer was there for less than two minutes when a policeman approached, asked him what he was doing there, and requested him to move along. The intelligence officer had to leave quickly. In addition, two plainclothesmen followed him until he entered a subway station. The meeting was not held.

New York and Washington have numerous restaurants, many of them representing different nationalities. Each restaurant has its own distinctive characteristics. One may specialize in steaks (the most expensive steaks are sirloin and T-bone steak), another is seafood; some restaurants have orchestras, others have not. Before selecting a certain restaurant as a meeting site, one should learn everything about the restaurant; the system of service, the type of customers, whether it has a bad reputation with the police, etc.

It is the practice in all restaurants to tip the waitress ten per cent of the amount shown on the check.

Depending on the nature of the agent operation, the officer and agent may sit at the same table and hold the meeting during dinner. Or they may sit at separate tables, keeping only visual contact for the purpose of exchanging prearranged signals.

Avoid the Press

American stores, periodically hold sales of their merchandise at low prices. At the beginning

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of the sale a large number of people usually gather at the store. In their efforts to advertise the sale, the proprietors invite newspaper photographers to the opening of the sale. To avoid being caught by the photographer's lens, our intelligence officers and members of their families should not visit the store during the beginning of the sale.

In New York there are no ticket collectors on the subway. The ticket office does not sell tickets but only metal tokens, which cost fifteen cents. In passing through the revolving gate at the entrance, the passenger inserts the token in a special slot.

An intelligence officer should always have several tokens with him, especially on the day of a meeting, so as not to waste any time in buying them at the subway entrance.

It is hard to imagine how agent communications would be conducted in New York without using the subway, which, despite its complexity, facilitates one's orientation in the city. It also affords a convenient place to check on the existence or absence of surveillance. In some cases, inadequate knowledge of the Subway System has forced officers

to cancel meetings with their agents.

Buses also operate without conductors. The driver allows the entrance and departure of passengers, makes change, and hands out transfers (at the request of the passenger). He gives change for bills but only up to five dollars. Thus the intelligence officer must always be certain that he has small change or one dollar bills.

A taxi can be stopped anywhere; this is done merely by waving the hand or by loudly shouting, "Taxi" when an empty one passes.

The driver writes in his log the place a fare entered the taxi, the place he got out, and the time. Therefore, an intelligence officer must never take a

taxi directly to the meeting place.

There are many companies in the U.S.A. which rent cars. Use of rented cars in the organization of agent communications is recommended, because this has a number of advantages. For instance, an intelligence officer can drive to the city in his own car, check for surveillance, and then leave it in a suitable area or in a parking lot. He can then complete his job in a rented car. This makes the work of the American counterintelligence service more difficult.

Use of Dead Drops
'Dead Drops' (i.e. hiding places where material can be left for prearranged pick-ups) are extensively used in communication within agent nets, or with individual agents.

Stationary 'dead drops' are selected or specially prepared in parks and squares, in trees, in the ground, in fences, in benches, in monuments, in public buildings, and beyond populated places such as forests, fields, seashores, riverbanks, etc.

In selecting and preparing a 'dead drop' in a park, one must bear in mind that a number of American parks (for example, Central Park in New York) have many squirrels which can destroy the dead drop (especially in hollow trees) and carry off our material.

The U.S.A. has up to two thousand daily newspapers with a circulation of about fifty-seven million, and more than seven thousand magazines. Both newspapers and magazines give considerable space to advertisements and all kinds of announcements. Newspaper companies receive sizable profits from advertisements and announcements and therefore accept them very readily.

Advertisements published in American newspapers differ greatly in content and in length. The most common ones deal with the sale and rental of living quar-

ters, the sale of personal effects, employment opportunities, announcements of weddings, divorces, births, and deaths, the loss of valuables and pets, etc. Below are several samples of advertisements which could be used in intelligence work. (Following samples appear in English.)

POSITION WANTED

Housework — Mature Colombian maid speaking a little Eng. will give considerable care to children or invalid lady; do efficient general housework. \$25-\$30 per wk. Exeter 4-0482, 7-10 p.m.

DOMESTIC EMPLOYMENT

Chauffeur, white—Wanted. Age 35 married. 12 years exp. Intelligent alert neat. Fordham 4-7457 before noon.

PUBLIC NOTICES AND COMMERCIAL NOTICES

My wife, Jane Smith Doe, has left my bed and board. I am no longer responsible for her debts. John Doe, 17 Leslie Lane, Dobbs Ferry, New York.

One can see from these examples that many advertisements can be adapted quite easily to the transmittal of information. Among the code words which can be used are the names or description of a lost article; a description of the circumstances; the place and time it was lost; the size of the reward for returning the valuable or pet; etc.

Illegal "residences" have a greater opportunity to make use of the press in arranging agent communications. Residences under cover may use the press on a lesser scale, primarily to transmit information or signals from agent to intelligence officer. On the whole, the U.S.A. presents favorable conditions for the use of the press for intelligence work.

A sum of money is paid to place an advertisement or some kind of announcement in the press. The text of these advertisements will contain a prearranged coded secret message.

A thorough study of the specific features of the

country enables one to select the most natural signals. For example one of our intelligence officers called an agent for an introductory meeting by sending the newspaper Washington Daily News to his apartment. The intelligence officer went to the city, made a careful check, and then called the newspaper office from a public telephone and asked them to start delivery on the next day to the address he gave them (the agent's address). A week after delivery started, the agent appeared at the prearranged meeting place.

Radio communications provide the most rapid means for transmitting orders and instructions from the Center.

Because of our distance from the U.S.A., should the need arise, we can set up radio relay stations which can be located on ships, submarines, and aircraft. We also must not exclude the possibility that in the not too distant future we can install a radio station on an earth satellite.

In certain special situations, we might consider the possibility of getting a courier to the American mainland by submarine. It must be remembered, however, that the U.S.A.'s shore defenses are stronger than those of other countries of the American continent. Therefore one should not always attempt to land an agent directly in the U.S.A. At times it is possible to send mail to a third country (for example, Mexico) and then deliver it overland to the U.S.A. Mail sent in this manner can be placed in the Center's dead drops.

Condensed from the forthcoming book, "The Penkovsky Papers," © 1965, Doubleday & Company, Inc.